

REMARKS

Claims 1 -5 are pending in this application. Claims 1-2 and 4-5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,055,592 issued to Smith for reasons as stated on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action. Claim 3 has been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The specification has been amended to reflect the current status of the prior cases to which the subject application claims priority. By this response, applicant respectfully traverse the above rejection and objection of the claims.

In paragraphs 2 through 6 of the Office Action, claims 1-2 and 4-5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,055,592 issued to Smith. In response, applicant respectfully submits that Smith does not qualify as a prior art reference.

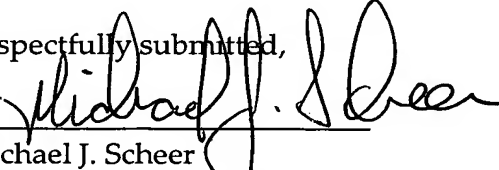
The subject application is a divisional of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/970,512, filed October 4, 2001 (now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,691,189), which is a divisional of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/170,828, filed October 13, 1998 (now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,321,281), which claims the priority of Japanese Patent Application No. Hei 9-280717, filed October 14, 1997. The Smith reference has an effective date of February 9, 1998, which is after the priority date of the subject application. Applicant submits herewith a verified English-language translation of the Japanese priority application. Accordingly, the subject rejection is moot.

In paragraph 7 of the Office Action, claim 3 has been objected to for reasons as stated on page 3 of the Office Action. Similar to the above remarks, applicant respectfully submits that claim 3 is patentable.

In view of the above, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Michael J. Scheer

Registration No.: 34,425

DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN &
OSHINSKY LLP

1177 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10036-2714
(212) 835-1400
Attorney for Applicant

Enclosure:

Verified English Translation of Japanese Priority Application No. Hei 9-280717 Filed
October 14, 1997.